United Nations A/57/PV.79

General Assembly
Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

79th plenary meeting
Friday, 20 December 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 17 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(g) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/57/108)

The President: As indicated in document A/57/108, since the terms of office of Chile, Equatorial Guinea, France, Japan, Namibia, the Philippines and the Russian Federation will expire on 31 December 2002, it is necessary for the President of the General Assembly to appoint, during the current session, seven members to fill the resulting vacancies. The members so appointed will serve for a period of three years beginning on 1 January 2003.

After consultations with the Chairmen of the groups of African States, Asian States, Eastern European States and Western European and Other States, I have appointed the Congo, France, India, Japan, the Russian Federation and Zambia as members of the Committee on Conferences, with effect from 1 January 2003.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of these appointments?

It was so decided.

The President: Regarding the remaining vacant seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, I will continue to hold consultations with the regional group concerned and will keep the Assembly informed.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda 17.

Agenda item 29 (*continued*)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, particularly in Africa

Draft resolution (A/57/L.70)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at the 43rd plenary meeting on 4 November 2002.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/57/L.70.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Boivin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to inform members of the following corrections to draft resolution A/57/L.70.

In operative paragraph 5, at the end of the third line, the words "ease of" should be replaced with the word "prompt".

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

02-75775 (E)

In operative paragraph 7, at the end of the fifth line, the words "adopted in Abuja" should be added after the words "plan of action".

In operative paragraph 11, at the end of the second line, the words "such as minimization of" should be replaced with the words "such as ways to minimize".

The corrections will be reflected in the final version of the draft resolution.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/57/L.70.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/57/L.70. I should like to announce that since its publication, Lesotho has become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/57/L.70, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/57/L.70, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 57/294).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 29?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 32 (*continued*)

Information and communication technologies for development

Draft resolution (A/57/L.71)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held a debate on this agenda item at the 43rd and 44th plenary meetings on 4 and 8 November 2002.

I give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/57/L.71.

Mr. Hassan (Pakistan): It gives me great pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/57/L.71 on information and communication technologies (ICT) for development.

The importance of information and communication technologies for development cannot be over emphasized. Acknowledging this importance, the leaders of the South, when they met in Havana in April 2000, unanimously decided to place knowledge and technology at the centre of the development policies of their respective countries. In the Millennium Declaration, our leaders resolved to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, are available to all. The 2000 Economic and Social Council Ministerial Declaration called for a coherent system-wide ICT strategy that would ensure coordination and synergy among the programmes and activities of individual organizations of the system so as to transform it into a knowledge-based system of organizations.

At its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly also devoted a two-day special session on ICT for development. In addition, preparations for the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society in 2003 and 2005 are under way. That is expected to provide a major opportunity to explore the full potential of ICT for development.

The draft resolution builds on the Millennium Declaration and the 2000 Economic and Social Council Ministerial Declaration. It stresses the need to use ICT as a strategic tool to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of the development programmes and technical cooperation activities of the United Nations system, as well as the crucial role that ICT can play in facilitating coordination and synergy between programmes and activities of the United Nations system.

The draft resolution is an important step forward towards developing a comprehensive information and communication technologies strategy for the United Nations system. I should like briefly to highlight some of the elements that need to be taken into account in developing this strategy.

First, we should encourage the system-wide application and use of information and communication technologies to strengthen the United Nations capacity to create, share and disseminate knowledge and to help make the United Nations more efficient and effective in service delivery to Member States.

Secondly, we should mainstream and integrate information and communication technologies more fully into the development and technical cooperation activities of the organizations of the system.

Thirdly, we should build collaborative networks and communities of practice among organizations of the system. Fourthly, we should encourage the use of ICT to promote the exchange of experiences and to enhance information-sharing among the organizations of the system and between the organizations and Member States. Last but not least, developing a comprehensive ICT strategy for the United Nations system will encourage all relevant United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental organizations to further their cooperation with and their support to the preparatory process of the World Summit on the Information Society and the Summit itself.

Based on the outcome of the informal consultations, I am happy to inform the Assembly that this draft resolution enjoys the support of all United Nations Members, and it is hoped that the Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/57/L.71.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/57/L.71, Suriname has become a sponsor.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/57/L.71?

Draft resolution A/57/L.71 was adopted (resolution 57/295).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 32?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33 (*continued*)

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Draft resolution A/57/L.69

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at the 33rd and 34th plenary meetings on 17 October 2002.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/57/L.69.

I should like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of A/57/L.69: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Norway and Senegal.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/57/L.69?

Draft resolution A/57/L.69 was adopted (resolution 57/296).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 41 (b) (*continued*)

Final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s: implementation of the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa

Draft resolution (A/57/L.68)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/57/L.68, entitled "Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa". I should like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of A/57/L.68: Ethiopia, Lesotho, Norway, Senegal and Suriname.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/57/L.68?

Draft resolution A/57/L.68 was adopted (resolution 57/297).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 41?

The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 41 as a whole.

It was so decided.

Agenda item 22 (l) (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations: cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Draft resolution (A/57/L.72)

Amendment (A/57/L.73)

The President: I would like to inform Members that there are some technical errors in some of the language versions of draft resolution A/57/L.72, which will be corrected in the final version of the draft resolution.

I now would like to give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan to introduce the amendment to draft resolution A/57/L.72 contained in document A/57/L.73.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): Mr. President, before introducing the amendment of the delegation of Azerbaijan, allow me to touch on an important matter that has a direct bearing on the item before us. My country's delegation profoundly regrets that the statement made in the plenary meeting on 22 October this year by the representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) covered the entire range of questions facing the OSCE but did not mention a serious problem that is being dealt with by the OSCE — namely, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

As a result of this conflict, 20 per cent of the territory of my country is still under occupation. Azerbaijan is the only State — I emphasize the only State — in the OSCE area whose territory is occupied by a foreign State, the Republic of Armenia. It is my country that has been compelled to cope with a humanitarian emergency that has caused the exodus of some 1 million refugees and displaced persons, the victims of ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Armenia.

Mr. President, allow me now to introduce the amendment of the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, contained in document A/57/L.73, reissued for technical reasons, to the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe".

This is not a last-minute amendment, as somebody has tried to describe it. What we propose is that it adequately reproduce the language of resolution 49/13, adopted by the General Assembly without a vote. That resolution states that the General Assembly:

> "Fully supports the activities of the Conference aimed at achieving a peaceful solution to the conflict in and around the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic and to alleviate the tension between the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijani Republic, and welcomes cooperation between the United Nations and the Conference in this regard". (*resolution 49/13, para. 8*)

I must make two comments in that regard. My first comment, which is of a technical nature, is that, at the time, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was called the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. My second comment is substantive. As Member States will note when comparing the current amendment with operative paragraph 8 of resolution 49/13, the language of the proposed formulation is much softer and does not mention the opposing party to the conflict, namely, the Republic of Armenia.

Nothing has changed since that time. The reasons for putting forward this amendment are still valid and pressing. It is a matter of principle. The highest interests of my country — its sovereignty and territorial integrity — are directly affected.

Operative paragraph 26 of the draft resolution contained in document A/57/L.72 reflects the OSCE language to which we gave our conditional consent when we expressed an unambiguous reservation during its adoption at the tenth meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, which was held in Porto, Portugal, on 7 December 2002. That reservation, which was made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, is contained in an official document of the OSCE Ministerial Meeting that underlines in particular the fact that:

> "The Republic of Azerbaijan has joined the consensus over the statement on the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, proceeding from the following principles of the OSCE according to which the participating parties will respect the territorial integrity of each of the participating States. Accordingly, they will

refrain from any action inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations against the territorial integrity, political independence or the unity of any participating State, and in particu'ar from any such action constituting a threat or use of force. The participating States will likewise refrain from making each other's territory the object of military occupation or other direct or indirect measures of force in contravention of international law, or the object of acquisition by means of such measures of the threat of them. No such occupation or acquisition will be recognized as legal".

Nevertheless, the delegation of Azerbaijan, acting in a spirit of compromise, has proposed its amendment, not to replace operative paragraph 26, but as a new operative paragraph embracing the United Nations agreed language. In this connection, I wish to express our gratitude to the Permanent Mission of Portugal for its efforts to accommodate our concerns in the draft resolution under consideration.

The United Nations, both in the General Assembly and the Security Council, has been seized of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 1992, has kept a close eye on developments with regard to finding a solution to the problem and has made its position quite clear. Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity have been repeatedly reaffirmed, primarily by Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993). It is the Security Council language that was reiterated in the General Assembly's initial resolution, namely, resolution 49/13, on the matter is question. In addition, previous and current reports of the Secretary-General submitted under this agenda item — specifically the reports contained in documents A/50/564, A/52/450, A/53/672, A/54/537, A/55/98, A/56/125 and A/57/217 — also clearly state that the Nagorny Karabakh region is an integral part of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Over the past six years, the Republic of Armenia has been the only State to vote against our amendment, although Armenia itself voluntarily joined the consensus on resolution 49/13 and agreed on the particular language that is now contained in the Azerbaijani amendment.

The Member States of the United Nations now have before them a small amendment that is vitally important to our country and its future. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I appeal to Member States to vote in favour of the amendment contained in document A/57/L.73.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/57/L.72 and the amendment thereto contained in document A/57/L.73.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. Grigore (Republic of Moldova): I would like to explain my delegation's position on paragraph 20 of the draft resolution contained in document A/57/L.72, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe".

As the General Assembly is aware, the issues addressed in paragraph 20 are of the utmost importance to the Republic of Moldova. The necessity of resolving the Transdniestrian conflict — which is one of the few remaining frozen conflicts in Europe — and the long-awaited completion of the process of withdrawing foreign troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova are matters that have been closely followed over the years, not only by my Government, but also by many other interested Governments and international organizations, in particular by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Porto OSCE Ministerial Meeting paid increased attention to those issues and, through its relevant decisions, made a further valuable contribution towards those ends.

As I have previously emphasized, although the United Nations is not directly involved with regard to Moldova, given the fact that there has thus far been very little or no progress with regard to both of those issues, the Organization's contribution is also required — in particular through this draft resolution, which, in our view, represents a complementary element in the overall international effort.

From that perspective, my delegation made a number of concrete and constructive proposals in connection with paragraph 20. We regret that it has not been possible to achieve the wording we suggested. In our view, those amendments would have allowed for a

more balanced text that would fully reflect the complex nature of the Porto decisions and of discussions regarding Moldova. We would also have preferred to have agreed on a text that had the added value of the United Nations, in accordance with, and as a continuation of, the language contained in previous United Nations resolutions on this subject. We also would have preferred not merely to agreeing on a text that constitutes an exact match of the wording contained in the paragraphs of the last OSCE Ministerial Meeting decision on Moldova.

In that context, and for the sake of clarification, I feel obliged to bring to the Assembly's attention an important point from the interpretative declaration presented at the Porto meeting by the delegation of the Republic of Moldova with regard to that paragraph:

> "We consider that the provisions of the ministerial statement contain the engagement of the whole OSCE community to ensure full and thorough implementation of the Istanbul Summit decisions on the Republic of Moldova. We urge the Russian Federation to honour the commitments it undertook in Istanbul in 1999 to complete the withdrawal of its forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova, and expect it to prove its political will in this regard in 2003, as the text of the present document stipulates. As was agreed by all parties involved in the negotiation of this statement, the mentioning of the 'necessary conditions' in the context of withdrawal refers solely to eventual technical arrangements and may in no way be applied to any political circumstances."

Having in mind the above statement, and for the sake of reaching an agreement, my delegation eventually accepted the compromise wording of paragraph 20 proposed by the Portuguese chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Nevertheless, we were not in a position to sponsor the draft resolution under consideration, as we had done with similar texts in previous years .

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): It is not the intention of my delegation to engage in a lengthy and pointless debate by replying to the groundless allegations and accusations levelled against my country by the representative of Azerbaijan. Rather, I would like to confine my intervention to addressing directly the issue in question.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Portuguese chairmanship-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for submitting the draft resolution contained in document A/57/L.72, which comprehensively covers all areas of interaction and cooperation between the two organizations, including with respect to conflicts in the OSCE area.

As were similar texts in previous years, the draft resolution before us is a result of extensive negotiations and consultations at the OSCE Vienna headquarters, followed by a Ministerial Council meeting; it reflects the consensus among all OSCE member States, including Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Paragraph 26 of draft resolution A/57/L.72, dealing with the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict, is no exception in that regard. It contains language agreed by all parties to the conflict and endorsed by the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group — France, Russia and the United States — which is the only body mandated to mediate the negotiations aimed at a peaceful resolution of the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict. Paragraph 26 is entirely based on the relevant paragraphs of the statement of the OSCE Ministerial Council, adopted by consensus at Porto, Portugal, on 7 December 2002.

Therefore, it seems contrary to any logic that Azerbaijan, which had already joined the consensus on the text of the draft resolution, at both Vienna and Porto, should break the consensus in the General Assembly by trying to introduce an amendment (A/57/L.73) that in essence contradicts the carefully negotiated text. That is why the sponsors refused to include the Azerbaijani proposal into the draft resolution submitted by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

The amendment to the agreed draft resolution is a deliberate attempt to impose a compulsory framework and thus to prejudice the outcome of the ongoing peace negotiations. While a peaceful and durable solution of the conflict is possible only through mutual compromises from all parties involved, the Azerbaijani amendment represents a one-sided approach. Moreover, the amendment would virtually force the States Members of the General Assembly to take sides in a conflict which is under negotiation.

Azerbaijan refers to the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict differently at different forums. In one forum, it grossly misinterprets the issue as a religious conflict

between the Christian Armenians and Moslem Azerbaijanis, thus striving to get an advantage by playing on the religious feelings of various countries. In other circumstances, Azerbaijan fervently emphasizes the principles of territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders, while failing to address the right of peoples to self-determination, a fundamental principle that the conflict is about.

Despite these continuous manipulations, the support in the General Assembly for the Azerbaijani amendment has been steadily declining throughout the years: nearly 150 countries, including the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group, refused to support it during the last session.

Once again, Armenia fully supports the draft resolution contained in document A/57/L.72; it finds the proposed amendment totally unacceptable and will vote against it. We urge all Member States to refuse to take sides in this issue and not to support the amendment contained in document A/57/L.73 and introduced to a consensual draft resolution.

Mr. Adamia (Georgia): My delegation has taken the floor to explain its vote before the vote on draft resolution A/57/L.72, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)". Georgia has always been vocal in supporting similar resolutions in previous years, as is the case today. We believe that cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE is of paramount importance for resolving conflicts and ensuring security and stability in the OSCE area. Therefore, we are convinced that the framework and principles for cooperation between these organizations has to be rooted in an objective assessment of the situation and in the affirmation of principled approaches to the outstanding issues addressed in the draft resolution. Although the draft resolution before us achieves that goal in many respects, we cannot but refer to a number of its flaws.

First, paragraph 22, in accordance with the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit commitments, supports the desire of the parties to complete negotiations regarding the functioning of the Russian military bases in Batumi and Akhalkalaki during the withdrawal, and notes that the visit of the OSCE experts to Gudauta was a milestone on the way to a speedy and legal transfer of the Gudauta facilities. For clarification, all those commitments concern the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which is a cornerstone of security in the OSCE area.

The wording of the paragraph, to put it mildly, is quite far from the reality. The desire on the part of the Russian Federation to engage in the aforementioned negotiations is virtually non-existent; the dismantling and withdrawal of the Russian military base at Gudauta should have been completed by July 2001, but the base is still operating. The timeframe and modalities for terminating the functioning of the Russian military bases in Batumi and Akhalkalaki should have been completed by the end of 2000. The issue is still unresolved due to the irresponsible behaviour of the Russian side, which suspended the negotiations without any explanation. Following assurances during the most recent OSCE Summit, in Porto, that the negotiations would be resumed, the Russian team finally arrived in Georgia, but without proper authorization for doing so.

We are of the view that these violations are of a fundamental character for the OSCE and that they should have been reflected in the wording of paragraph 22 of the draft resolution. Therefore, I would like to affirm that the paragraph cannot in any manner be construed as tacit approval of the failure of the Russian Federation to end the illegal presence of its troops in Georgia through constructive negotiations. In the event of continued obstruction of the negotiations, we reserve the right to act as necessary for the protection of our national interests.

Secondly, the welcoming and appreciative wording in paragraphs 22 and 23 regarding the OSCE involvement in the peace process in the Tshkhinvali region/South Ossetia and the conflict settlement in Abkhazia, Georgia, is also a deviation from reality.

To give a real sense of the complexity of the problems, I would like to provide just one example: in pursuing a policy of integration of the separatist regimes in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Russia has recently opened unilaterally a new customs post on the border crossing of the South Ossetian section of the Russian-Georgian border. This is in addition to the simplified visa regime unilaterally imposed with regard to those regions of Georgia, while in the rest of the Russian-Georgian border the regular visa regime remains in force. The most telling examples are the statements by the so-called president of South Ossetia and the so-called prime minister of Abkhazia that they are Russian citizens and that, therefore, their ultimate

goal is to seek to reunite the separatist territories with Russia. Moreover, paragraph 23 of the draft resolution fails to even mention the proposals on the distribution of constitutional competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi, the so-called Boden document, which is the central issue of the United Nations-led peace process in Abkhazia. Having said that, I would like to reiterate that my delegation, in present circumstances, would not be against the consensus that has emerged. However, we would like to place on record our reservations and concerns, of which we have spoken today.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/57/L.72 and on the amendment thereto contained in document A/57/L.73.

In accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the amendment is voted on first. The Assembly shall therefore take a decision on the amendment circulated in document A/57/L.73.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Georgia, Honduras, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Morocco, Nauru, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan.

Against:

Armenia, South Africa.

Abstaining:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

The amendment contained in document A/57/L.73 was adopted by 37 votes to 2, with 100 abstentions.

[Subsequently the delegation of Yemen informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour, and the delegation of South Africa had intended to abstain.]

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/57/L.72, as amended.

I should like to announce that since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/57/L.72: Albania, Canada, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, San Marino, Slovakia, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica,

Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Armenia, Belarus, Madagascar.

The draft resolution, as amended, was adopted by 147 votes to none, with 3 abstentions (resolution 57/298).

[Subsequently the delegation of Saudi Arabia informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: I shall now give the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the resolutions just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ragab (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to explain our vote on the draft resolution contained in document A/57/L.72 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

After giving full consideration to the draft resolution, the delegation of Egypt concluded that, for a number of reasons, it would have been better to keep the original text, as presented by the coordinator of the item.

First, the text corresponded with the language contained in the OSCE Summit declaration, adopted in Istanbul in 1999, with the participation of the parties to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. It was also in conformity with the OSCE's communiqué of 28 November 2000.

Secondly, the draft resolution focused on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, not on the settlement of any regional differences or disputes. Thirdly, the text did not take sides; rather, it welcomed the organization's efforts to promote an atmosphere of confidence between the two countries.

My delegation therefore abstained in the vote on the amendment contained in draft resolution A/57/L.73.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to stress that our vote today is not linked to our position on the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

Mr. Wang Donghua (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/57/L.73 containing the amendment proposed by Azerbaijan. The amendment proposed by Azerbaijan, relating to the question of Nagorny Karabakh, was in conformity with Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993) and 874 (1993). That is why the Chinese delegation voted in favour of the amendment.

China's position is that conflicts between States should be resolved politically, through negotiation. We support the efforts of the international community, in particular the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to resolve the question of Nagorny Karabakh. We hope that Azerbaijan and Armenia will soon be able to find a solution that is acceptable to both sides and that will benefit both countries and ensure peace and stability in the region of the Caucasus.

Ms. Plaisted (United States of America): The three Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group of the

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Russian Federation, France and the United States, taking into consideration their role in the Nagorny Karabakh peace process, decided to abstain on any amendment to the text proposed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. At the same time, our abstention in no way changes our commitment to helping the parties to achieve a settlement through negotiation based on mutual compromise, with the understanding that the principle of territorial integrity, as well as other important principles of the United Nations and the OSCE, will continue to be respected.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (l) of agenda item 22?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 42

Follow up to the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session: implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS

Draft resolution (A/57/L.67)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held a debate on this agenda item at the 44th, 45th and 49th plenary meetings, on 8 and 13 November 2002.

I give the floor to the representative of the Philippines to introduce draft resolution A/57/L.67.

Mr. Manalo (Philippines): I have the honour to introduce, for the consideration of the General Assembly, draft resolution A/57/L.67, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session: implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS".

The draft resolution before us welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and decides to convene a day of high-level plenary meetings for the follow-up to the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, to be held following the general debate of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

In operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, it is also decided to organize an informal interactive panel discussion, to be held in parallel with the afternoon plenary meeting on this subject, with the participation of representatives of civil society, including those representing and working for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Before concluding, I wish to thank all delegations for exhibiting the necessary spirit of compromise and flexibility throughout the negotiations on the text of this draft resolution.

Finally, I hope that the draft resolution will meet with the support and approval by consensus of the General Assembly.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/57/L.67.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chen Jian (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management): Under the terms of operative paragraphs 2 and 4 of draft resolution A/57/L.67, the General Assembly would decide to convene a day of high-level plenary meetings devoted to the follow-up to the outcome of its twenty-sixth special session and the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, to be held immediately following the general debate of its fifty-eighth session on a date to be decided by the General Assembly during its fifty-seventh session. It would also decide that an informal interactive panel discussion would be held in parallel with the afternoon plenary meeting and that it would have as its theme "Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: from policy to practice-progress achieved, lessons learned and best practices".

Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/57/L.67, it is the understanding of the Secretariat that the one-day plenary meeting and the half-day meeting for the panel would be convened the first working day immediately following the end of the general debate. Services and facilities for these meetings would be provided from the overall existing provisions approved for the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/57/L.67. May I take it

that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/57/L.67?

Draft resolution A/57/L.67 was adopted (resolution 57/299).

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank Ambassador Manalo of the Philippines for having so ably conducted the negotiations on this resolution.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 42.

Agenda item 52 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft resolution (A/57/L.74)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held its debate on this agenda item at the 38th to 40th and 42nd plenary meetings, on 30 and 31 October and 1 November 2002.

Today I have the honour to present to you draft resolution A/57/L.74, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change".

At the outset, let me draw your attention to one minor change in draft resolution A/57/L.74. Operative paragraph 4 should follow operative paragraph 5, and they must be re-numbered accordingly. This change is proposed in all six official languages.

The draft resolution reflects views of Member States expressed during the debate on agenda item 52 that took place from 30 October to 1 November, as well as comments and suggestions made in various informal consultations conducted in the course of the main part of this session. United Nations reform was undoubtedly the most widely discussed topic.

With the draft resolution in front of you, we will provide our guidance and directions on how to proceed further with the reform process put forward by the Secretary-General. Many of the changes will strengthen the impact of the work, especially in economic and social areas, rationalization of documentation and publications, clarification of the roles and responsibilities for technical assistance, inter-agency coordination in respect of human rights, and so forth. Restructuring of the Department of Public Information will continue, including the rationalization of the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs. Management capacities in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will be strengthened, and the new Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa will be entrusted with responsibilities agreed upon in the recent resolution on the New Partnership for Africa's Development. These will focus more closely on cooperation between the United Nations system and Member States in relation to Africa. The planning, programming and budgetary cycle of the Organization will be streamlined, and a shorter proposed programme budget for the period 2004-2005 will better reflect the priorities of the medium-term plan for 2002 to 2005, the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of the major international conferences and summits.

I am very pleased to point out that in this draft resolution, we provide general endorsement of the Secretary-General's reform proposals. Some proposed actions can be implemented immediately; others will require follow-up deliberations in various United Nations bodies in the coming years.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Madam Louise Frechette for her involvement and patient determination to provide clarifications and responses to numerous queries by Member States throughout the whole process of our deliberations, in addition to arranging three conference room papers that were issued at the request of Member States.

My gratitude also goes to His Excellency Mr. Abdul Mejid Hussein, Vice-President of the General Assembly, who chaired some of the informal meetings and assisted me in guiding the consultations process. My thanks also go to the facilitators of this process, who were instrumental in bringing together diverging concerns, comments and observations, and in finding common ground for our final agreement. Their role was indeed vital and indispensable.

I hope that this draft resolution has the Assembly's full support and that it will be adopted by consensus.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/57/L.74.

I give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): My country joined the consensus on the important draft resolution that we are about to adopt because we believe that, despite its shortcomings and ambiguities, this text is generally satisfactory and is geared towards the necessary reform and essential strengthening of the Organization that we all desire. In addition, it aims to make the Organization a more effective institution that is clearly more democratic and better adapted to new realities.

In fact, given that the reform of the Organization is by definition a subject of concern to us all, it was that need for greater democracy that on several occasions in recent weeks — when negotiations were in a state of confusion due, in part, to a lack of vision and clear and consistent direction — led us to call for increased transparency and participation on the part of all Member States.

Against that backdrop, it must be recognized that the proliferation and abuse of the use of facilitators — whose integrity and commitment I hasten to commend — have to a great extent contributed to the confusion that set in at a certain point. Nevertheless, particular tribute must be paid to Ambassador Abdul Mejid Hussein of Ethiopia. When despair threatened to paralyse our efforts and cause us to give up, he was able to get us back on track in the final days and to lead the process to a successful conclusion.

The results could have been better. The General Assembly's support for the reforms advocated by the Secretary-General could have been more decisive. But that would have been true only if the negotiating process had started on a different footing, if there had not been as many speakers and if we had all fully assumed our roles and shouldered our individual responsibilities.

That being said, and now that this series of reforms is going to be adopted and, it is to be hoped, quickly implemented for the greater good of the Organization, we must all promptly and calmly draw the lessons from this exercise in which we have been engaged for three months. We must also set out to accomplish the equally inspiring task that awaits us, namely, revitalizing the General Assembly — a body that has unfortunately become increasingly marginalized and less able to respond to challenges, but which nevertheless continues to be the main deliberative body and the irreplaceable forum where the will of the international community must be forged.

From that standpoint, it is not by introducing cosmetic changes or by attempting to pass hasty and last-minute supposed reforms that we will restore to this body its primary responsibilities and make it the equal of the Security Council, which, it must be recalled, needs to be radically reformed. That reform is in our interest, but it is also primarily in the interest of the Council itself, if it is to continue to effectively and legitimately carry out the formidable mandate entrusted to it by the Charter.

The effort to reform the General Assembly must be a collective and sustained undertaking. Imagination and tenacity must be our driving force, given that the Security Council has become increasingly all-powerful — a development we can only welcome, if it means that its authority will command more respect and if international peace and security will be better preserved. The General Assembly, where all of us are equal in rights and are equal partners in shaping its future, must therefore necessarily regain its full mandate and purview.

My delegation is quite prepared to play its part in this beneficial reform effort, so long as the approach is comprehensive, coherent and transparent.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/57/L.74, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system: an agenda for further change", as orally corrected.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/57/L.74, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/57/L.74, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 57/300).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote after the adoption of the resolution, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. Niño Gómez (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, allow me to reiterate our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on strengthening the United Nations system (A/57/387). The Group would once again like to extend

its full support to him for the reforms outlined in the report. In section I of its summary the report "suggests a number of improvements aimed at ensuring that the Organization devotes its attention to the priorities fixed by the Member States, and that the Secretariat gives better service." That is quite clear, and is in line with the concerns of the Group with regard to making the work of this universal institution more effective.

We have focused on every effort that would lead to the achievement of those lofty goals since the beginning of our discussions and throughout the negotiating phase. Our work focused on two different considerations. The first was that no action contemplated in the reform effort should have a negative impact on the negotiating capacity of developing countries, particularly as regards the provision of services to meetings of the Group and the publications intended to serve as important elements in the decision-making process. The second consideration was that no action in the reform process should limit the capacity of the Secretariat to provide full and quality services in the development of developing countries.

The report contains a wide array of ideas based on what has been achieved since 1997 to strengthen this important world body. In order to build an efficient Organization in today's globalized world, we can truly expect for there to be follow-up to the desires and priorities of Member States, as well as to the aspirations of civil society. The report of the Secretary-General deserves the comprehensive and holistic analysis of Member States, in order to ensure transparency and full participation in the reform process of the Organization.

After an intensive consultative process, for which we would like to extend our thanks to the Vice-President and Ambassador of Ethiopia, Mr. Hussein, as well as to Ambassador Simonová, for their commitment and hard work, we are pleased to have before us today the draft resolution contained in document A/57/L.74, which the Assembly has just adopted. That resolution was the result of the consensus achieved in our deliberations, as well as of our desire for a more efficient and effective Organization that will support the activities of the international community aimed at economic and social development. The role of the facilitators was also important, as they enabled us to make decisive progress in the drafting of today's consensus document. The Group of 77 and China trusts that this framework for action will guide our efforts towards strengthening the United Nations so that it is capable of meeting the challenges of development before us in the new millennium.

Finally, as this is our last formal statement for the year, we wish to express our full satisfaction over the fact that we have concluded a year with the assistance of excellent diplomats and negotiators. We would like in particular to single out partners from the developed world, including, from the European Union, the delegation of Spain, during the preliminary phase, and the delegation of Denmark, during the second phase. Similarly, I wish to thank all our colleagues from the developed world who always fully understood the aspirations and needs of the developing world. Lastly, I would also like to thank each and every member of the Group of 77 and China for their discipline and for the trust they placed in Venezuela.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding States Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia and Slovenia, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union, Bulgaria and Romania, and the associated country, Turkey, as well as the EFTA countries of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Norway, align themselves with this statement.

The resolution, which we have just adopted, is an important milestone in the continued United Nations reform process, which is based on the goals and priorities set by the heads of Government at the Millennium Summit.

Today we have decided to reinforce the implementation of the development agenda, building on the Millennium Declaration and the outcome of the Monterrey and Johannesburg Summits. We have also reaffirmed the strong focus of the United Nations on the African continent, which is enshrined in the membership's unanimous support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The General Assembly has given a renewed mandate to the Secretary-General in order to strengthen the Organization. We have formulated our joint vision of new and more modern ways of doing business in the United Nations, and we have now requested the Secretary-General to go ahead with implementation, which must start today. There is no time to lose when it

comes to strengthening the United Nations human rights and development activities, information work, conference management, reporting procedures and budget cycle.

The 2004-2005 budget will be crucial for the reallocation of resources to new priorities. Reform is not to be understood as a budget-cutting exercise, but as the Secretary-General has pointed out in his report, we need a thorough revision of the programme budget, including the possibility to dispense with mandates and activities that we, the Member States, are convinced to be no longer relevant.

We, the Member States, will come back to some specific issues, in close dialogue with the Secretary-General, as part of the normal intergovernmental consultation, once the detailed implementation gets under way. As we go along, the General Assembly will continue to consider the measures which are pertinent to it, while the Secretary-General will move forward with the activities which are under his purview.

We are confident that next year the Secretary-General will report to us that tangible results have already been achieved and that further improvements are on track, under the oversight of the Deputy Secretary-General.

The European Union would like to commend your leadership during this difficult process. Today's result is, of course, first and foremost a reflection of the political will and determination of the Member States to strengthen the United Nations. However, the reform process is also anchored in the joint efforts of the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly to move things forward.

We must continue to build on this strong foundation of good will, mutual trust and spirit of cooperation when implementing our joint vision for a strengthened United Nations. The European Union pledges its support and active participation towards achieving this goal.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada): I would like to take a moment to thank you personally, Mr. President, for the leadership you have given to this process. I would like to commend Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette for her hard work in getting us started on this process. I would also like to salute the effectiveness of Ambassador Hussein of Ethiopia, in helping us all to reach agreement. In addition, I would like to thank the facilitators for their contributions, which have been key to such progress as we have achieved. The facilitation process is a method of work that we believe we should use more often, as it is more suited for the advancement of some common goals, such as this reform, than the usual negotiations organized along group lines, which too often lead to lowest-common-denominator results.

The Secretary-General put forward an agenda for change, not a detailed blueprint for change. The resolution we have just adopted embraces the course that the Secretary-General has charted, encourages him to implement actions within his managerial purview, and commissions processes and reports across a broad agenda to develop the details on implementing the improvements we all agree are needed.

I will not hide the fact that we believe that more could have and should have been accomplished, and that the text is more defensive than warranted, particularly with respect to the authority of the Secretary-General. Together, we have nevertheless managed to impart momentum to the effort to further strengthen the Organization, and there is much to do.

The preparation of the next budget is a critical next step. The Secretary-General has challenged us to anticipate a more strategic budget, one that aligns resources with priorities and one that undertakes the painful but essential task of identifying outdated activities for discontinuation. In this resolution we have clearly welcomed this challenge and urged the Secretary-General to do just that.

We have no doubt that the Secretary-General and his senior managers will pursue energetically the agenda for management reform and efficiency measures that they themselves have set out. Improving conference services, restructuring the Department of Public Information, strengthening the effectiveness of the field presence of the United Nations, and an array of people management improvements are among the many issues that the Secretariat can proceed to implement within its managerial prerogative.

We look forward to the next stages of the process. Many of the most complex issues identified by the Secretary-General remain to be resolved in detail, such as how best to improve the planning and budget system. Member States will thus have much to address next year. Canada looks forward to supporting the Secretary-General's efforts to improve and strengthen

the Organization and to join all those Members who are likewise committed to this goal in giving further support and direction required.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Let me immediately join other delegations in offering our thanks and congratulations to you, Mr. President, to your Vice-President, our outstanding colleague from Ethiopia, the facilitators who assisted you so ably in developing this resolution, and Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette as well, for her help along the way. Developing a coherent and strategic response to the Secretary-General's proposals over a short time was indeed a formidable challenge.

The facilitation process that you employed, Mr. President, was in our view well suited to the task. The work of the facilitators in listening to Member States in our formal and informal meetings, evaluating all the proposals and formulating a compromise text, was indispensable. Without their endeavours and careful judgement, we may not have reached an outcome that moves the Organization forward.

We were frankly disappointed that it was not possible to bring your text directly to the Assembly, as had been intended. Not all of Australia's proposals were incorporated in that text, and there were parts where we thought much bolder action was justified. Nevertheless, we were ready to accept the outcome of the President's process and the compromises which the President and facilitators had labouriously worked out, in dialogue with Member States. And we deplored the lapse back into the worst habits of bloc-to-bloc negotiations for which, sadly, the General Assembly has become infamous.

It is our firm belief that we must use processes such as the one that you, Mr. President, initiated, more often. The world in which the United Nations operates is constantly changing, and the United Nations needs to be sufficiently flexible and dynamic to respond to it. Too often, our usual ways of doing business in the General Assembly lead to inaction and rigidity. They stifle adaptation and lead to atrophy.

The contention in the resolution that reform of the Organization encompasses the revitalization of the General Assembly could not be more true. We have shown that during our consideration of this item, and perhaps we have managed to revitalize the Assembly at least a little along the way.

With the resolution that has just been adopted, the Assembly is saying that the Secretary-General is going in the right direction. On several fronts -- especially those within his purview — it is now up to the Secretary-General to go forward. We urge him to do so and look forward to the results. In particular, we look forward to the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005. Not only will it be shorter and more strategic, but it will better align the Organization' s limited resources with its priorities. This is a vital step in strengthening the United Nations and it will take time to fully implement. But it will mean that the Organization can do more in the service of the priorities that we the Member States have agreed upon.

There will be many detailed reports on aspects of reform during 2003, and some of them will require inter-governmental approval. We have set a context for their consideration here today. Next year, we will examine the detail of each proposal and get on with implementation. The adoption of the resolution advances the Secretary-General' s commendable efforts to improve the Organization, and it creates new momentum. Australia remains firmly committed to making the United Nations stronger.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): I am pleased to have this opportunity to make some very brief remarks with respect to the resolution just adopted, to which Japan attaches great importance.

The Government of Japan expresses its appreciation to you, Mr. President, to Ambassador Hussein of Ethiopia, a Vice-President of the Assembly, to the staff of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and to the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, for their efforts in promoting the adoption of the resolution.

The Japanese Government would also like to express its ongoing support for the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in promoting the reform of the United Nations, with a view to aligning its activities with the new priorities through the preparation of a revised programme budget and to making the Organization more effective, efficient and relevant.

As stated in the resolution, the strengthening of the United Nations also encompasses the reform of the intergovernmental bodies, including Security Council reform and the revitalization of the General Assembly. My delegation therefore looks forward to the active

involvement of the Secretary-General and of the President of the General Assembly in the forthcoming resumed session so as to facilitate the ongoing process of reforming the United Nations.

Mr. Kennedy (United States of America): To remain vital and relevant, any Organization must constantly evaluate and improve itself. The United Nations is no exception. For that reason, the United States joined many other States this fall in welcoming the Secretary-General' s initiative to ensure the continued effectiveness of the United Nations in meeting the critical needs of the peoples of the world. The report (A/57/387) has provided a cohesive and sensible road map for continuous improvement, and we endorse it in its entirety. The resolution that has been adopted provides a clear endorsement by all Member States of the Secretary-General' s goals and actions, reached after weeks of consultations by you, Mr. President, and by your excellent coordinators.

While we would have preferred a shorter and simpler statement of support, the resolution is relevant and fair, reflecting the authority of the Secretary-General as chief administrative officer, while also emphasizing the role of Member States in improving and changing mandates. We support the resolution and look forward to progress reports by the Secretary-General in pursuing the United Nations agenda for further and continuous improvement.

In closing, I should like to say that this institution owes you, Mr. President, your Vice-Presidents and your colleagues, as well as Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette, a large measure of thanks for the continuous and creative efforts that brought the resolution to successful adoption today.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

Given the fact that so many speakers referred to the work of the facilitators, I feel that it would be appropriate to remind the Assembly who they were. In addition to Mr. Abdul Mejid Hussein, a Vice-President of the Assembly and Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, who has already been mentioned by me and several others, the group of facilitators included Mr. Movses Abelian, Permanent Representative of Armenia; Mr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh; Mr. Luis Gallegos Chiriboga, Permanent Representative of Ecuador; Mr. Denis Dangue Réwaka, Permanent Representative of Gabon; Mr. Mochamad Slamet Hidayat, chargé d' affaires of Indonesia; Mr. Stafford O. Neil, Permanent Representative of Jamaica; Mr. Mohamed Bennouna, Permanent Representative of Morocco; Mr. Dirk Jan van den Berg, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands; Mr. Don MacKay, Permanent Representative of New Zealand; and Mr. Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan. I join others in thanking them for their work.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 52.

Programme of work

The President: With regard to the programme of work of the General Assembly, apart from organizational matters and items that may have to be considered by operation of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, and bearing in mind the action already taken by the Assembly thus far, I should like to propose that the following agenda items remain for consideration during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly: agenda items 10 to 12, 16 to 19, 21, 24, 27, 35 to 38, 40, 42, 44 to 46, 52 to 56, 66, 76, 78, 79, 84, 86, 87, 92, 100, 107, 109, 110 to 151 and 160.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that those agenda items remain for consideration during the fifty-seventh session of the Assembly?

It was so decided (decision 57/585).

Statement by the President

The President: This afternoon we have concluded our work for the main part of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I am pleased that we were able to wrap up a few days before Christmas day, and I hope this signals improved efficiency of our work, partially through the better use of the time allocated for our deliberations.

I should like now to share a few words and to reflect on some important events and processes of the past three months, as well as to outline some of the work ahead of us in the months to come.

Without doubt, one of the most important issues of this autumn session was the discussion on the strengthening of the United Nations system. In the resolution that has just been adopted, we provide guidance and direction on how to proceed further with

the reform process. Many of the proposed actions will strengthen the impact of the work of the Organization, especially in economic and social fields, through a revised programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 that will better reflect the Organization's new priorities through rationalization of the work of the Organization and its information services, streamlining management, clarifying the roles and responsibilities in technical assistance and many other measures that will make the United Nations more focused, efficient and effective. The adoption of the resolution has been a significant achievement. It represents, I believe, an important stepping stone in the future work and deliberations in the continuous process of reforming our Organization.

The discussion on the follow-up to the Millennium Summit reaffirmed our commitment to the implementation of objectives and goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. Despite uneven progress achieved in the implementation, I am hopeful that we will be able jointly to address the gaps in implementation and progress further to attain the goals. Resolution 57/144, adopted last Monday, outlines the way the review of the implementation and follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit would be structured in the years to come. A high-level plenary meeting on the comprehensive review of the Millennium Declaration is being proposed to take place during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, five years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration. The review of the implementation of the development goals contained in the Millennium Declaration should be considered within the framework of the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields.

Special attention throughout the session was paid to the most urgent issues of developing countries, particularly those in Africa. The successful outcome of the high-level meeting on the New Partnership for Africa's Development in September and deliberation on many issues related to the African continent, such as the causes of conflict and promotion of peace and sustainable development, the fight against malaria and so forth, contributed to increasing the awareness of Member States and the international community of those issues.

We have also devoted a significant amount of time to the alarming spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Resolution 57/299, just adopted, calls for a high-level plenary meeting during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, adopted at the twenty-sixth special session. In that respect, I would like to emphasize the importance of the participation of civil society, including those representing and working for people with HIV/AIDS, and the private sector in this whole process.

In the coming months, I also promise to build on the endeavours of my predecessors in their efforts to make the work of the General Assembly more efficient and the meetings more interesting. I hope that a step in that direction was the organization of the open-ended panel "Afghanistan One Year Later". The panel offered valuable insights and grasped the issue in a manner that enhanced the subsequent debate of the General Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan. I believe that informal and interactive debates such as that one have the potential to invigorate the General Assembly's discussion of various topical issues.

As I have mentioned on several occasions, I am determined to continue the process of revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. There is still much room for improvement in its work. Our immediate task is to adopt the basic elements for determining the duration and opening date of the general debate. I plan to convene informal consultations on that topic in January.

Beginning in January, I will chair two important working groups. The first is an open-ended ad hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, as decided in resolution 57/270, adopted today. It will focus on concrete recommendations, with a view to contributing to the implementation of internationally agreed development goals. I also intend to hold a number of informal consultations and brainstorming meetings, and on the basis of those to suggest a work programme for consideration and adoption by the Working Group. As for the open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, next February it will enter its tenth year. Although no major breakthrough is expected, I hope that, given the importance of the issue, the deliberations of the Working Group will produce at least an agreement on some basic principles.

The prevention of armed conflict is yet another topic to which the General Assembly will devote its attention. I have already held preliminary consultations with a number of interested delegations, which have helped me understand the positions and concerns of Member States and to decide on the best method to move ahead. I have appointed an extended group of facilitators that will also be instrumental in drafting the relevant draft resolution. I intend to launch the drafting process, under my chairmanship, in mid-January, with a view to finishing the negotiations by April at the latest, and then, hopefully, to adopt a consensus resolution.

In conclusion, I would like to use this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all representatives for their valuable and important participation in plenary meetings and in the Main Committees. I want to extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, for their dedication and contribution to the successful work of the Organization. I would like to warmly thank the Vice-President of the General Assembly for assisting me in presiding over the meetings and in guiding the work of the Assembly. I also had excellent working relationships with the Chairpersons of the Main Committees, whose input into our common achievements was essential.

I would like to extend special thanks to the representatives of the Secretariat, especially the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, under the able leadership of Under-Secretary-General Chen Jian, who have been always been helpful and supportive in the fulfilment of my duties. Invaluable support and guidance was provided to my Office and myself by the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division, in particular by Mr. Vadim Perfiliev and Ms. Catherine Boivin. Last but not least, I would like to pay tribute to all of those whose contribution enabled us to successfully arrive to the end of the main part of the session, especially the interpreters, the providers of conference room services and the security officers.

I hope that our deliberations in the new year will advance in the same constructive and efficient manner as we experienced during the main part of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and I look forward to working with all members in the resumed session.

Finally, allow me to wish everyone a peaceful and joyful holiday season.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.